TRANSCRIPT—Fairview Oral History Project

Interviewee: Charlene Noland

Interviewer: Ruth Ehrlich and Sandra Jackson

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Ruth Ehrlich: Today is April the twenty-third, 2019. This is Sandra Jackson and Ruth Ehrlich and we are here at Brookdale with Charlene Noland, who happens to be Sandra's mother. And we're excited that we're here today she's going to tell us all about her family and we're just going to sit back and listen. So Charlene, if you would, start by telling us where you were born and how to came to be in Fairview.

Charlene Noland: Wasn't in Fairview. I never lived in Fairview. Never. I was born in Bristol and I came to Asheville—.

Sandra Jackson: The Reynolds District now, but it was Gashes Creek then.

CN: Yeah. In the old house above Reynolds, Blake Reynolds' house. We rented that.

SJ: When you were six, I thought you lived with your grandmother.

CN: Okay, we'll go back to six. Six, we moved in with my grandmother.

RE: Is that the first time you were in this neck of the woods, when you were six?

CN: Yeah, that's right in what you call Reynolds now.

SJ: But tell her that your whole family has been here since the seventeen hundreds. Her daddy worked the railroad and they were in Bristol. Tell her where you went to school.

CN: I went to Reynolds. Oakley first. And then we moved to Appalachia. Virginia. A coal mining town. I loved it. Doesn't sound like it, but I had a ball. You played games on the street together, all together. Everything. I missed it.

RE: How long were you in Appalachia, Virginia?

CN: Four years.

RE: Then you came back here?

CN: Yeah, back here.

RE: Where back here?

CN: Did we come to grandmother's house?

SJ: I thought grandmother's house when you were six, and then you lived in that house near Reynolds High School when you came back.

CN: Yeah, Blake Reynolds' house, we rented it.

SJ: The house that she lived in when you came back from Appalachia, was there at the foot of Cedar Cliff.

CN: Blake Reynolds' house.

SJ: Yeah. Near your house.

CN: Yes, near there.

RE: And how long were you at Blake Reynolds' house?

CN: I was sixteen. I lived there until I got married at eighteen.

Is that right? Eighteen? Eighteen years old.

RE: Where did you meet your husband? Where did you meet Hubert? Tell us about that.

CN: Riding in an old history car, old—.

SJ: Calm down.

CN: I can't. This is different than I thought. T Model, and it had "Danger" written on it. And he passed by the road, I was going to take carry milk to the house and I saw that and he was driving it and Oh Lord, I's just bust ugly, and so then we went on, he came next door. I was invited to a birthday party the next day and he was at that party.

RE: Did your heart flipflop?

CN: Oh, yes.

RE: So you met him at the party—.

SJ: She met him the day before carrying that gallon of milk up the road on her bicycle.

RE: So you actually met him that day?

CN: No, I didn't meet him. He drove by. I didn't meet him.

RE: You met him at the party.

CN: Yeah.

RE: Had he caught your eye the day before?

CN: Yeah.

RE: Did you catch his eye the day before?

CN: Yeah.

SJ: Tell her about whenever you said that when you lived here from six to eleven, and that you went by Grandmother's and Granddaddy's house and saw those two little boys out in the yard.

CN: When I went by his house I saw two little boys playing and I never thought I'd marry him, and he never thought he'd ever marry me, because he'd come by Reynolds and I was there and he said, 'I never would've dreamed I'd marry you.'

SJ: Because she talked all the time.

RE: I can't imagine that. So, you had seen Hubert out in the yard playing when they were little?

CN: Whenever I went by his house, to his grandmother's house to buy honey.

SJ: See our grandparents knew each other.

RE: And then you reconnected at this party. And how long was it after you all reconnected at the party before you got married?

CN: Eighteen. Two years.

RE: You courted for two years, did you?

SJ: And had me at nineteen.

RE: What was your courting like? What did you do to court, you and Hubert?

CN: The only thing we did was go to the movies. Mom and Daddy went in the car with us, we didn't do anything by ourselves.

RE: For that whole two years?

CN: And where did you get married?

CN: Clayton, Georgia. Took off, told Mother, Daddy wasn't there. And I told Mother I was going to get married that day and we went to Clayton, Georgia and got married.

RE: Why Clayton? Why did you go to Georgia from this neck of the woods?

CN: Because it was out of town and you could get married quick.

SJ: Everybody that age got married in Clayton, Georgia.

SJ: My in-laws got married in Clayton.

RE: What did Mom have to say when you told her you were going to get married that day?

CN: She was all right but Daddy wasn't. He said, 'Well doggone, he didn't ( ) me to tell him.'

RE: Would Daddy have had a different opinion about you getting married?

CN: He probably would have, I don't know.

SJ: Tell her about when you lived here from six to eleven, tell her about your grandmother's house.

CN: Oh, I want to tell about that. We moved up from Bristol. I was in a long ( ) from a funeral home. We knew David Eckert. We knew him.

SJ: Hearse.

CN: Hearse, that's what it was. And we walked up those cement steps and on up to Grandma's house. I got to spend the night at her room that had a talcum sheets. The sheets of her bed were fluffy.

SJ: Featherbed.

CN: Yes, featherbed. And that house, oh it was a miracle. It was a princess to me, that house was. It had three sidewalks, one here, one there, one at the back, and they all connected. There was an upstairs balcony that took off from the kitchen, and went up there in the balcony, and we had more fun up there. You could dress up in old things and those spinning wheels and there was a window that was open, no curtains, no nothing and I stuck my head out and hollered at Jack, my cousin across the road.

SJ: Jack Barrett.

CN: Yeah. And we dressed up, we had a lot of fun. And I'd go climb up trees. I was a tomboy then. Until I got to Appalachia.

RE: Did you go fishing? Was there fishing on the property?

SJ: No. They could have. The creek's there, but they didn't.

RE: You didn't go splatter in the creek?

CN: Yeah, I did that.

SJ: And Barrett, her uncle, I'm sure let her because he used to let me play in that creek.

RE: Now when you left Grandma's house, where did you all go? Is that when you went back to Appalachia?

CN: That's when I had a good time. That's because we lived in a house there on a street, and that street was full of houses and all the kids got on the street and played with us. We played all the games that kids play. And then we rode bicycles down the hill

and stopped the cars and we had fun, snowing, you know. And Ann was my next door neighbor and I liked her and she played piano and I wanted to do that, but Momma wouldn't let me because I wouldn't practice long enough. And went to school. The school was around the bend in the town. It's just a little tiny thing, the town. It's a coal mining town. Mama got there and went down the wall, you'd wipe coal dust off of the walls. We had fun. And Daddy was an Engineer at the plant.

SJ: Railroad.

CN: Yeah. And he got to work at night and they got to drinking and they'd get mess and so we stayed four years and then they got into such a mess he had to leave. And we had this when he came back up here.

RE: When you and Hubert got married, what was Hubert doing when you all got married?

CN: Worked at Beacon.

RE: Beacon Blanket?

CN: Oh yeah.

RE: Did you ever work at Beacon Blanket?

CN: No.

RE: Hubert worked there? How long did he work there?

CN: He worked until he graduated.

SJ: And then he worked there a little while—.

CN: And just a little while after he got through, he got the job at CP&L.

SJ: Wasn't that more like in the fifties though?

CN: Yeah.

SJ: Because when they had me he was still working at Beacon.

CN: He just barely finished there, it seemed like it wasn't much—.

SJ: And Grandmother and Grandaddy worked there too.

RE: So you and Hubert got married when you were eighteen? Was Hubert eighteen too?

CN: Nineteen.

RE: He was nineteen. And you had your first baby when you were nineteen and he was twenty.

SJ: Almost twenty and twenty-one.

RE: In our day it would nothing, today people—can you think of a kid today at twenty or twenty-one having a baby? That's just like it's a whole different world. Where did you and Hubert live? Did you live at your Grandmama's house?

CN: When we first got married, we lived in Aunt Minna's house. She was gone to Florida. And we rented her house and we didn't rent very long because she wanted to

come back and we had to move. We moved down the road to his grandmother's and we got upstairs and that's where she was conceived, upstairs at Grandma's house. It's still there.

SJ: We were talking about where you lived, and then when I was born, where did we go?

CN: Mama's house for a while.

SJ: But that was Mama's house which was the old—Grandma's house.

RE: Where was Grandma's house?

CN: Just down the road.

SJ: After they were married, they moved into Grandma Noland's house, which is on Rosehill Road. But whenever I was born, they went back to her Grandmother's house there on seventy-four-A until—. I was five months old when you went where?

CN: Back to my house. We built a house, a four-room house, no bathroom.

RE: Where was it?

CN: Where it is today.

SJ: Rosehill Road, between my great-grandmother's house and my grandmother's house.

RE: So you built a four-room house. So, you had what? A living room, a kitchen and two bedrooms?

CN: That's right.

SJ: I remember them putting the bathroom in.

CN: We got a bathroom later on.

SJ: I was old enough to remember that being done. And I was scared of outdoor johnnies. Yes, I didn't like them.

RE: Do you remember her being scared of outdoor johnnies?

CN: No.

SJ: I was always afraid I was going to fall down that hole.

CN: You never did tell me.

SJ: Oh, I did back then.

CN: I don't remember.

RE: How long did you live there at Rose Hill in your little house that you built?

CN: When we had them, we lived there five years? Were you five when we went to the—? Five years?

SJ: Four or five.

CN: Must have been four, surely. Yeah, we lived four years there. I can't get over it. Because then we went to—oh, Lord, where'd we go? We went to Wilmington and we lived in Rose's apartments and we had the end apartment. And I thought, you ( ) you just have to remember this. Oh, okay. We got to Wilmington, where'd we go?

SJ: You rented an apartment, you were telling.

CN: We were in the apartments. Oh, we were in apartments in Wilmington. Lord, you want to tell the story of life—. I come from the country, pure country all the way. Moved to the city of Wilmington, moved in this apartment and I was the last one. Well I was sort of the last one.

SJ: Naive. You were sort of naive.

CN: I reckon I was. And this woman lived next door to me, I didn't unpack for a week. She came down and she said, 'Let's go to town, and get you over this.' I wouldn't go and I had on my shorts and a thing bit me through my shorts and it hurt.

SJ: A mosquito?

CN: Yeah. They had plenty of mosquitoes. Oh Lord, have mercy.

RE: So what brought you back to the Asheville area?

CN: Oh, you mean after we'd gone to Asheville? Wilmington? We lived there ten years, almost ten years.

SJ: And Daddy come home every—.

CN: Every weekend.

SJ: —third weekend we were up here when he had a four-day weekend.

CN: He had day shift, second shift, and third shift. He swung them all. Day shift, second shift, third shift. And on the weekend, long weekend, we came to Asheville. Every time.

RE: And why did you do that, what was the draw to bring you all to Asheville?

CN: Hubert Noland wanted to come home.

RE: And Charlene was going to come with her man. And why was he so intent on coming home? Was he Mama's boy, or was he just drawn back to Asheville?

CN: He was drawn back to Asheville – a mountain boy.

RE: So then what brought you all back here finally, he came back every weekend for ten years—.

SJ: They built a steam plant right across over here.

CN: They built a steam plant. And when he come back, we moved back up here, we moved in my mama's house first, with Mama. How long we stayed, I don't know. Not long.

SJ: Seven, eight months. Something like that.

CN: We built our house on Avondale. Bee Ridge. That's the house we live in now. Or did live in.

RE: Have I been to that place?

SJ: No, you go up Avondale Road and it branches off to Bee Ridge or goes right to Avondale. She's up on Bee Ridge. She named the road.

CN: I named it, but I didn't name it. Helen Stroup's the one that got it named.

SJ: But you helped pick the name.

CN: Yeah. They went to everybody asking.

SJ: And she got the school bus up that road.

CN: Oh, I did.

RE: Tell us about that. How did you get naming the street. Why Bee Ridge?

CN: It was named that. Helen wanted that on account of there was bees around there. Hubert had—.

SJ: Daddy had about 20 stands of bees and Grandaddy did.

CN: They had bees.

RE: So did you all rob them and get honey? Did you help do that?

CN: Not at first. Not until he had a stroke. Then I did and then she did and oh Lord, we had a time when he had a stroke.

SJ: I even hived one with him after the stroke.

RE: Now tell me about getting the school bus up the street. How did you manage to get the school bus to come up the street?

CN: It came up there and it turned around in my second drive. I had a drive that went all the way around the house. And over there was a drop-off, and the young boy, sixteen year old drove that bus, turned around there. I got on the phone and I called the principal over there and I told him, 'Please send him up further to turn around.' That road was dangerous on that side. And he did.

SJ: She was scared to death of us going over the cliff.

CN: She liked Rob.

SJ: I liked him, yes. For about a month. I was madly in love with him for about a month.

RE: So he turned around after he picked your kids up. You just couldn't convince him to turn that bus around before he picked your darlings up?

CN: He picked them up and took them around there that time. That time he took them. I didn't let him take them no more. I got on the phone.

RE: Good for you. Did you work? What did you do?

CN: Now that's where I went to use A.C. and Reynolds Middle School, isn't it?

SJ: Yes, but you were at Oakley first.

CN: Wasn't it A.C. Reynolds? Oakley, first and then A.C. Reynolds. I worked Secretary Aide. It went between Aide and Secretary, I worked both jobs. Back and forth.

RE: In the school system.

CN: Yeah.

RE: How long did you work, Charlene?

CN: At Oakley, I worked five years. Four years was part-time and one year full-time. Then when they built over there at the middle school, I said, 'I want to go there.' So, I went there. And I had about fifteen years at Reynolds Middle School.

RE: Did your children go to school where you were working?

CN: Yeah.

RE: Did they let you keep an eye on them?

SJ: No, I was already married by the time you were working. Shirley was at Oakley when you were there, right?

CN: But I was with Deborah.

SJ: You were with Deborah some, but not me.

CN: Okay.

SJ: I was already married. And Deborah you really didn't either. Because when I came back from California, I was twenty-two, so Shirley would have been ten and Deborah was in college. Shirley is the one that had you following her.

RE: Were you following Shirley?

CN: Yeah.

RE: Tell me why you were following Shirley.

CN: Well. I didn't follow her good enough. She was just somebody to follow.

RE: Was she a rowdy child?

CN: No. Quite sneaky.

SJ: I thought you always said I was that.

CN: They were all that way.

RE: Did you find Shirley doing something she shouldn't be doing?

CN: Yeah, but I didn't say a thing about it.

SJ: I don't think she's going to now either, because I don't know what it is.

CN: I didn't catch her. I was at school with Shirley, at Oakley School I was with Shirley. And she'd gotten into trouble with a teacher. I was working for the office and I got hold of it and she was in the office talking to the principal. I thought that was a little upsetting.

SJ: But then when my son came along, she was at the middle school and he had to write a hundred times on stuff and they really were slack on him because of Mama but he was, you know, he didn't get what he should have because they were liking Mama.

RE: Did you ask for special favors, or they just gave special favors? They just gave special favors. Tell me some of the biggest changes you've seen in that area, while you were living there. Because you were there for how long?

SJ: All her life, really, except for a few years in Virginia and Wilmington.

CN: Well, Wilmington was ten years and Appalachia was fourteen, fourteen years out of my life. The rest of its been spent.

SJ: But Bristol, you were how old? Six?

CN: Six, ten.

SJ: So, about twenty years. Rest of it's been right here.

CN: Rest of it's been spent here.

RE: What's been some of the biggest changes you've seen?

CN: Well, houses have grown up on that road when I moved there. The road was not paved at first. And then it got paved.

SJ: You're talking about Bee Ridge?

CN: Bee Ridge.

SJ: Bee Ridge and Rose Hill, because it wasn't paved either.

CN: Rose Hill?

SJ: Because I remember seeing that paved.

CN: It went around.

RE: It's hard to think about it but there were cars, because you saw that dude coming by named Hubert in the car with "danger" written on it.

CN: That was a long time ago. There were plenty of cars, though.

RE: Where did you do your shopping, your grocery shopping?

CN: Ingles.

SJ: No, not at first because it wasn't there, remember?

CN: Well at first where did I shop?

SJ: A and P, Bi-Lo's.

CN: A and P was in town.

SJ: Right, we had to go to town.

CN: Yeah, with Grandaddy in his old rotten T model.

SJ: But about the roads being paved, I remember seeing Rose Hill paved when I was a kid and then it stopped about where it splits off and then our side, the Bee Ridge, wasn't paved until I was fifteen or sixteen.

RE: Did you all have a garden?

CN: Oh, yeah. We had three-fourths of an acre garden.

RE: Did you really? What did you grow in the garden?

CN: Everything.

RE: Vegetables? Did you can them? Did you freeze them?

CN: Yep, I canned and froze them all. When I was working at school, I'd can them and froze them.

SJ: And trust me, when they were ready, you got them all, because Daddy didn't pick a little bit.

CN: He'd say, 'They're here, they're here. they're here.' And he'd bring them in.

SJ: Five rows of corn, huge rows of corn and you got all that corn. That was Daddy for you.

CN: And we had everything else, you know.

RE: Did you have farm animals, or just a garden?

CN: No, just a garden. You wouldn't call our house, no you wouldn't call our house a farm, but we had those birds, what are they called?

SJ: Crows? Turkeys?

CN: Turkeys that would come, bears would come, deer. Animals would come on my place.

SJ: Coyotes?

CN: Yeah.

RE: How did you keep them from getting into your garden?

CN: Oh Lord, we tried.

SJ: Years ago they weren't as bad as they are now.

CN: Are they worse now?

SJ: You remember that. When Daddy had died, she opened her back door and was banging on it trying to keep the bears off the grapes.

CN: Oh Lord, I don't remember that.

RE: Rowdy child. Not afraid of anything. How long ago did you lose Hubert?

CN: Sixty-five, was it?

SJ: '05.

CN: ‘05.

SJ: He was seventy-seven, seventy-eight. Somewhere in there.

RE: Where did you have your children? Did you have your children at the hospital?

CN: Sandra and Deborah at St. Joseph’s. And I had Shirley down in Wilmington.

RE: So you’ve seen a lot of houses grow, what else have you seen change about that area?

CN: Houses and cars.

SJ: And schools. Reynolds Middle and High wasn’t there when you were little.

CN: No.

RE: Where did you go to church? Did you go to church?

CN: Yeah, Gashes Creek.

RE: Gashes Creek up there where the cemetery is?

SJ: That’s where she’ll be someday.

CN: Yeah, that’s where I will be.

RE: Are you still a member of Gashes Creek?

CN: No. We moved. We moved around.

SJ: You didn't move around, you just went to Reynolds.

CN: We moved to Reynolds, that was our last church.

SJ: After Daddy died.

RE: But you'll still be buried at Gashes Creek.

CN: Yes.

RE: Do you ever go back and visit Gashes Creek Church?

CN: I've seen it, yeah. It's at the top of the hill.

RE: I went to church up there when I first came, I went. I didn't realize there were so many tiny churches. I just didn't have any clue. And it was tiny. I didn't go very long.

SJ: Her great-grandparents helped start that church.

RE: Really. That's amazing.

SJ: Yeah, that graveyard's full of every relative except her Daddy's parents are right out here near Roberson High School. The rest of them are all at Gashes Creek.

RE: Is Hubert buried at Gashes Creek?

SJ: Up on the very last row.

CN: Yeah, it's getting full. I don't know what they're going to do now. No room.

RE: How did you get a space in the cemetery at Gashes Creek?

CN: Oh Mama got it a long time ago.

RE: Were they paid for? Did you buy them? So you paid the church for the cemetery, because I've never thought about the cemetery is that churches have cemeteries. I never thought about that. You buy for it, just like you would—.

CN: You better buy one now if you haven't got one now.

SJ: And get it paid for.

CN: Well, I just went to the lesson and I'm Palliative Care and Hospice. I knew all about it, you don't want to talk about it, but I knew all about that. But that's one thing you need to do now. Well, what church do you go to?

RE: I go to Skyland Baptist.

CN: Skyland Baptist.

SJ: She comes on Sunday mornings. I'm trying to get you to go in there. You're always napping. She's one of those that comes on Sunday morning.

RE: We come on the second Sunday, my Sunday school class comes on the second Sunday of the month to do Sunday School here.

CN: Where? At your church?

RE: My church. Skyland Baptist comes here.

CN: Where's Skyland Baptist?

SJ: Right down the road. Right across from were Cletus and Ann lived years ago. That church.

CN: It's moved from there now.

SJ: No, not Biltmore. I'm talking about the one right down the road here. It's still there. It's next to French Fryz.

CN: Oh, so that's the one you go to.

RE: And I'm going to come get you the next time we're here.

SJ: Do.

RE: To come to Sunday School.

SJ: And if she's laid back with her head snoring, wake her up and take her.

RE: We could get you to sing with us. Did you sing in the choir?

CN: Yeah, I was in the choir. I like singing.

RE: See? You need to come and sing with us.

SJ: Do come get her, Ruth, on those Sundays.

RE: I'll be here early enough to come get you. How about that?

SJ: Second Sunday, Mama.

RE: Now tell me who your parents were, Charlene.

CN: Mama was Ruth and Daddy was Charlie.

RE: Ruth and Charlie who?

CN: Willis.

RE: And were they from here?

CN: Mama was from here and Daddy was in Bristol.

SJ: But Daddy, Southern Railroad was why he was in Bristol. But he was from here. And Nanny was Ruth Sales Willis.

CN: And the Sales's were from Charlotte. She was kin to somebody.

SJ: That was Lances.

CN: Yeah, Lance in Charlotte. Sales's were in—.

SJ: Sales's came over in the seventeen hundreds. And her great-grandmother was a Lance from the Charlotte area.

RE: And were you born and raised here?

CN: Yes.

SJ: Remember, Bristol?

RE: Oh that's right said, you said Bristol. I'm sorry.

SJ: That's because Gan was in Southern Railroad and they put him in Virginia. You didn't tell her where you worked before you got married. Where everybody else in the family had worked.

CN: School?

SJ: No, before you got married. Before you had me. Where did you work?

CN: Southern Telephone.

SJ: Southern Bell.

RE: What did you do for Southern Bell?

CN: I was playing. I was playing master and all at once they had new—.

SJ: You did information, right?

CN: No. I did everybody in the Asheville area, but—.

SJ: Long distance?

CN: They're new.

SJ: You did the switchboard.

CN: Yeah, and when they put on the grandmother or the something, they put on the new ones went to that, and I had to stay there and then I got pregnant and I went into the bathroom and I told somebody I was pregnant—you know me and my mouth—

and they went to the supervisor and told her that I was pregnant. She said, called me in there, 'Are you going to work here when you have the baby?' I said, 'No.' So she put me to simply answering calls and working with local.

SJ: So they weren't going to waste training you.

CN: Absolutely, that's why she wanted to know.

SJ: See, her mama met my grandaddy, because she was an operator at Southern Bell.

CN: And my sister was an operator, and they all do—.

SJ: And I worked at Southern Bell. Because I got on because of them all knowing the family, that's why I got on.

RE: And what did you do at Southern Bell?

SJ: I was an operator too. I couldn't do long distance because Miss Percy thought my legs were too long to sit at the board, so she put me on Information. Because I was too tall to sit. I'm six foot, so she thought my knees would bump, so she stuck me on Information and I hated it. But then it was good.

CN: I liked working there.

SJ: Oh, I like Southern Bell.

CN: The only thing that could get you, you couldn't talk. That about killed me.

SJ: I did and got in trouble.

CN: I did too.

SJ: When I worked in California at the telephone company, one night some of us got in there and we plugged in what was that? Columbus, Ohio and plugged in Columbus, Georgia and had them sitting there going Columbus, Columbus. We did all kind of things.

RE: Now where you were at the Southern Bell, they had party lines, right? Did that make your job more complicated?

CN: At first, I did those just in front of me, then I had to learn the party and the party was four numbers and they'd come in and tell you that you can go into a line and they'd tell you that you had to repeat that to the customer. And at first, I bet I gave a hundred thousand wrong numbers because I couldn't remember the number. But I finally learned. And so then you'd go up here and get the number and go in their head.

SJ: You need to tell that to the speech therapist on Monday that you had trouble with numbers.

CN: Numbers were something.

RE: So, that house that you built, that first house you all built, that four room house, tell me about it. Did you think it was a palace when you built it?

CN: I don't know, I was just glad to have it.

RE: As a young couple—and you added bathrooms onto it but did you ever add other rooms on to it?

CN: No. We sold it to his—Bobby and them.

SJ: Daddy's sister.

RE: Is the house still there?

CN: Yeah.

RE: Has it been added on to?

CN: Yeah.

RE: How big is it now?

CN: Not much bigger. They put a pool in the backyard.

SJ: They took the front porch and made it as a room and that's basically—. They can't go either side because it—grandmother's house is here and—.

CN: See grandmother's, mine, and then another grandmother and Aunt — was up here.

SJ: Grandmother, Mom and Daddy, then later my aunt, Daddy's sister built here and then the great-grandmother's house and then the great-aunt's was up on the hill.

RE: So how was it having the family all there that close? Was that a good thing?

CN: Well, I resented his Mom and Daddy at first. Hubert worked at Beacon at that time, second shift. His Mom and Daddy worked the second shift. They'd all come in,

they'd drink coffee and be up there a long time before they'd come. I used to hate that. I wanted him to come right then. And I had to wait. Had to wait for him.

RE: And what did you want him to do, that you wanted him to come home so fast?

SJ: Don't ask her. She might tell you.

RE: Not like you had dinner waiting for him.

CN: I had to wait. He'd do it again.

RE: Did that mean that there were a lot of kids that played from the family too in that area?

CN: You played with kids, then I had Deborah.

SJ: There were no kids for us to play with in that neighborhood. It was all family.

CN: Wait until we got to Wilmington and there was kids.

RE: I was thinking with a lot of family, whether they were all having kids at the same time.

SJ: Daddy's sister, her child, her oldest child is fifteen years younger than me. And the brother, his kids are younger but they lived in town.

RE: That's interesting, you know, because I think that extended family concept, well you still have that kind of family concept, don't you—?

SJ: Well, with her, Mama's sister lived right further down on Rose Hill and I would play with my cousin Gary, who was a year and a half older. Plus Mama's mother kept me and Gary a lot, so we always played together.

RE: So, did you cook a lot?

CN: Yes.

RE: Did you go out?

CN: I learned to cook. I learned to cook when I got married and lived in that house. I couldn't do it. I learned to cook.

RE: How did you learn to cook?

CN: I just cooked simple things. And then Grandmother would come down and she—I wanted gravy, I love gravy. If you had tasted my gravy at first, it was awful. She finally got it through my head.

SJ: This was Daddy's mother.

RE: So what was the secret to good gravy?

CN: Time. It just took time. I don't know.

RE: If you were to teach me to make gravy today, what would you tell me to do?

CN: Oh Lord, get you some hot grease, and get some flour, put it in there, stir it around, add water to it, and that's it. And milk.

SJ: After her sister died, I've got a picture of Mama standing in the kitchen teaching my daughter and her sister's husband how to make gravy. You were teaching Alan and Jennifer because Alan wanted to learn how to make it after Virginia died.

CN: And I taught him?

SJ: Yes. I've got a picture of you teaching him.

RE: Did you teach him to make biscuits too?

CN: I make biscuits.

SJ: My son thinks nobody can make them like her.

RE: What's the secret to your biscuits?

CN: My mama made them. I just learned to make them. My mama made them and I just made them.

SJ: Oh, and you didn't ask her about her brothers and sisters.

RE: Tell us about your brothers and sisters. Did you have brothers and sisters?

CN: I had a sister and a brother.

RE: Which one were you?

CN: Middle.

RE: You were in the middle, so who was older?

CN: The oldest was sister.

RE: Your sister, Virginia.

SJ: And tell her how many years she was older than you.

CN: Nine.

RE: She was nine years older than you?

CN: And the brother was eight years younger than me. We were raised like only children.

RE: I bet you were. That was unusual, was it not?

CN: That was unusual.

SJ: Tell her what you said to me the other day about Lee when he was born, that you were afraid.

CN: I went over to the Aunt Daph's the night he was born, they sent me over to Aunt Daph's. He was born in Grandma's house. And they sent me over there and I thought Mama would never love me again. I just thought that all the time. And then I came back and he was alive and everything and she did, but I couldn't get over that feeling, that Mama never would love me again. She did, her way.

SJ: Nanny's way. In other words, Gary and I were the two favorites, we were the two oldest grandkids.

CN: And Deborah, Mama treated her bad. She did.

RE: Family's are something, aren't they?

CN: They are.

RE: Did you all ever get to go out to eat? Or did you just cook at home?

CN: Home.

SJ: Coming from between Asheville and Wilmington we'd stop in Charlotte at McDonald's. When they first came out, that was cool.

RE: They're probably weren't many options, were there, for going out, if you wanted to go out to eat?

SJ: They didn't have the money to, too.

RE: Exactly. I remember McDonald's opening up and what a big deal that was, that McDonald's was in town. Fast food was being introduced in those days. We just didn't have it.

SJ: And we'd stop about Charlotte and get it, and going back to Wilmington, Grandmother would make us big ham sandwiches, remember? That's Daddy's mother, and I've got ham left over now and I told Eddie, I said, 'Buy some white bread, I'll make a Grandmother sandwich.'

RE: When you were living in this neck of the woods, Charlene, were there ever any big earthquakes, floods, fires, anything like that, that you remember?

CN: No.

RE: You never had to deal with any environmental—.

CN: No. No. Nothing like now. The Lord must be coming now because of there's so much fires, a mess, all the time. It can't be long until he comes.

RE: Were you here in seventy-three? Somebody talked the other day about a flood in seventy-three. Was it seventy-three? Were you here in the flood of seventy-three? Do you remember that?

SJ: She was here but she probably doesn't remember because it didn't really affect us. Because, you're high up. Remember people died in that flood and everything? It was a bad one, but—.

CN: Oh, yeah. That Mama told about?

SJ: No, your mama was dead by then. She died in sixty-seven.

RE: So there's an advantage to living on a hill, isn't there?

CN: Yeah, there is, and you better fix it to run off.

SJ: Tell her what used to be where the house is now.

CN: It's still there, isn't it?

SJ: Well, yeah, Mom, I don't mean that, what used to be there before the house. Where Robert had...

CN: Robert had a racetrack there, a motorcycle track.

SJ: Daddy's brother had that.

CN: That was the land—oh Lord, you don't want to hear all this junk.

SJ: Yes, they do.

CN: We were going to build where Linda lives. That was the Noland's house. And brother was going to build here, Robert was going to have that. And we got ready to come up here and he said they had talked to one another, I didn't know nothing about it, he said, 'Well, you can have this if you want it.' Hubert said, 'I want it.' I didn't know it until we moved up here and we had that to live in.

SJ: Robert had to live in town at the time because of being a fireman.

CN: They had to live in town.

SJ: And now they don't, because our son lives way out here and he's a fireman. Same place that Robert was.

RE: Did there used to be community gatherings around here? Tell me about those.

CN: Well, I don't guess there was, but community gatherings—.

SJ: Fire Departments, Church Homecomings.

CN: Church Homecomings. They had that. Homecomings. That's what we had mostly long about then.

RE: Do the Church Homecomings, did everybody bring food and put blankets on the ground? Is that how you did it?

CN: Yes.

RE: What did they call them back in those days, was it Dinner on the Ground?

CN: Yes, Dinner on the Ground. I remember they'd have Homecoming. Lord, I don't know.

SJ: Tell her about your great-grandmother, how much she liked flowers and all that stuff.

CN: Oh, she had a flower garden and it had everything in the world in it. She had flowers everywhere, her whole place.

SJ: And before they paved or widened seventy-four, I went back over to the house and dug up—there were six varieties of Daffodils I dug up. I got them in my yard.

CN: You oughta got more than that.

SJ: I know.

CN: You never did get the cement steps?

SJ: The cement steps were taken by the road widening. They took them down.

RE: When was the road widened?

SJ: Eighties. It had to have been in the eighties.

CN: When they widened it there was part of the road left in front of our houses.

SJ: It was a two-lane road when I was a kid. Here's Martin's Monuments, which is a business there, there used to be, on this side of the road here where there's a high bank, there was one on that side of the road where the creek is and Mama said they called it Aunt Em's Cut, right? And the road came through there, because her grandmother was Emma and they called it Aunt Em's Cut because it was right in front of the house.

CN: And the boys would get up there and stood on the top cut and look at the cars and see what they could.

SJ: And I did that when I was a kid. Gary and I did. We did it too.

CN: Sit on the car?

RE: And see what they could.

SJ: Seeing the cars.

RE: Just to see what was going on in those cars as they sped by that had "Danger" written on them.

CN: They didn't have "Danger" written on them, but they were dangerous.

RE: So what do you think has been the most fun about living here, Charlene?

CN: Most fun about living here?

RE: What's been the best thing from your standpoint?

CN: Living here? I don't know what—. You don't mean living here?

RE: Living in this area, in Asheville.

CN: Well, I always wanted to, but in Wilmington, I loved Wilmington. But I hated to come back here, I hated to come and then when I did, then I loved it the best. I changed.

RE: When you left Wilmington, you said you went to Wilmington as a country girl, when you came back, did you feel like you were coming back to the country, or was it more citified by the time you got to come back?

CN: Well, it was more citified then. But I still didn't want to come, it took me a while to—every time I'd move it'd take me a while to get used to that place.

SJ: She had fun in Wilmington, there was a group of them that hung out, CP&L people.

CN: A whole group.

SJ: But they all spread out after that. Half of them came up here.

CN: One of them is still alive now ( ).

RE: How did you all learn about what was going on in the neighborhood or in the city? Or were you all the neighborhood, your family?

CN: Talking about Wilmington or Asheville?

RE: Asheville.

CN: How did we learn about what happened?

RE: What was going on in the neighborhood or in the news.

SJ: Party lines, probably.

CN: We had party lines back yonder, you used to hear them. I'll tell you, we had four of them.

RE: Did you hear some wild stuff?

CN: Yeah.

SJ: I remember hearing those too.

RE: Were there lots of people of different faiths or were they all kind of—do you remember what their faiths were? Like, isn't Gashes Creek a little Baptist Church?

CN: Oh, they all were. Everybody in the whole community.

RE: Did you think if somebody wasn't a Baptist that they were foreigners?

CN: No. I used to—Ann Meyers, my friend in Appalachia, was a member of the—I went to the Baptist Church, she went to the Methodist Church. And it was different than ours. I went to hers, they'd sing over and over and over the same old songs. I don't know.

RE: Tell me, when you joined the church, like long ago, like at Gashes Creek when you joined the church, where did you get baptized?

CN: At Raleigh, I mean—wait a minute.

SJ: Were you baptized here in Asheville?

CN: Yes.

SJ: In the creek?

CN: No, I was baptized in the—wait a minute. Reynolds. Oakley, it was in Oakley. The church—.

SJ: Reed Memorial?

CN: Reed Memorial. I was going to Gashes Creek Church and they didn't have a place and—.

RE: A baptistry. So they were using baptistries. You weren't baptized in the creeks and the rivers.

SJ: So you were baptized at Reed Memorial which I forgot the name of it now, it's across from Oakley School. That church.

CN: Isn't it Reed Memorial?

SJ: No, they've changed the name of it. It's no longer Reed Memorial.

RE: But you were a member of Gashes Creek and they used the baptistry at Reed Memorial. So they weren't doing creek baptisms. I wonder if anyone's doing that anymore.

SJ: There's a Mennonite Church that does in Cane Creek. They do that. I was talking to a gal one day and they're still doing that some in the summer. And Biltmore does it every so often, goes down to Enka lake.

RE: I don't know that I have anything else. Can you think of anything else?

SJ: There was something I thought of and I can't think of it. What did you and Daddy do when you were dating? That was one thing.

CN: We'd go to the movies with Mama and Daddy.

SJ: Nanny and Gan went with you all the time?

CN: Most of the time.

RE: That was probably significant back in that day. I remember if you'd get to have a car date, you thought you were hotdogs, so back in your day, to go out without Mom and Dad, you'd be hotdogs. You didn't walk to church or anything like that?

CN: We rode to church.

SJ: Too far to walk really. You could tell her the stores that were right around there, like Wilson's and—.

CN: Wilson's store, was there.

RE: What was Wilson's, was it a department store, a grocery store?

CN: Grocery store. And another grocery store across the street. who was that?

SJ: Riddle.

CN: Riddle's was that, and it had her going through Oakley back there, that way.

SJ: Where you start up to Oakley was Riddle's, and when you come down almost where the parkway is now, was H.L. Wilson's daddy's, Hobert Wilson's store. Because H.L., he was our pastor for a little while and he walked in the church, saw me and said, 'Noland.' I said, 'Yes.' He said, 'Johnny.' I said, 'No.' He said, 'Bertie.' I said, 'Yes.' He said, 'Robert.' I said, 'No.' He said, 'Hubert.' I said, 'Yes.' He named them all.

RE: He just looked at you and knew you were a Noland?

SJ: I look like her and I look like Daddy's sister, don't ask me how I can look like them both, but I do.

RE: Which one of those girls was your favorite?

CN: Oh Lord, I like them all.

SJ: She better say that.

CN: I like them all.

SJ: We all have our own categories.Tell her what I am.

CN: That's right. Deborah is the—Shirley buys the clothes here. Deborah does decorating. You do my—.

SJ: I was always the one that cleaned her house, gave her her grandkids. Deborah did one. but later.

SJ: I was the grandkid, cleaning the house. Deborah was always decorating and stuff, and Shirley is the only one who can do her clothes.

CN: See Deborah went to college at—Interior Design, she took that. And Deborah took Interior Design, that's why she likes homes. She didn't go to college and she likes—.

SJ: I got married and had kids, which is what I wanted to do.

CN: And she likes home. Home the best.

RE: Well, she's really good about knowing everybody and all the history. Sounds like you all like to talk.

SJ: And Nanny would tell us tales. Her Mama was Nanny and she'd tell us tales.

CN: And everything.

RE: Were you real close with your mama?

CN: No. I was, but I wasn't. I was but she would whip me and she'd take a hickory stick to your legs. She would lose it when she was whipping me. She would keep on whipping me. Yeah. She lost it. You could look at her giving it. She lost it. And she whipped me and I never could get over that. But she did. But she loved me.

RE: Did you deserve the whippings when you got them?

CN: I don't remember any whippings that I got, what I got them for. I don't remember.

RE: Did you have to go get your own whip, your own switch?

CN: Yeah.

SJ: Mama, who used to spank me?

CN: Oh, Lord, I did just like Mama did me, and whipping her. She did the same way I did, and so I decided that wouldn't do no good, and I just took reading away from her, reading books and that killed her. And because whipping didn't do her no good and whipping didn't do me no good, but Mama did it.

SJ: But Nanny never figured out what to get Mama with, Mama figured out me.

CN: But she was still my mama. I loved my mama.

RE: I think back in those days, I don't think people thought of alternative ways to punish children. They knew the physical—get the switch, get the razor strap, or the belt.

CN: Well she didn't get that, she just got a whip.

SJ: That's what Mama'd do. Let me tell this. She was going to spank Deborah one time and she'd gone out to get the switch, Mama had gone out to get the switch.

Deborah was in there screaming and hollering like she was dying. And Daddy went in there and told her to quit beating her to death, and Mama says, 'I'm out getting the switch. I'm not beating her.'

CN: He didn't believe in whippings and I did coming from that, so I had—.

SJ: Deborah, see she didn't like to be spanked and me, I'd just stand there and look at Mama.

CN: She stood like that and Deborah was so different, you know, she'd just scream before I even touched her. And Shirley, she didn't get none.

RE: Because she was so good, or you were tired of whipping at that point.

CN: I was tired of whipping. She was eight years younger. Don't you know, Sandra and Deborah were three years apart. Then eight years between that last one and Sandra. And Shirley. Well, she come and—.

SJ: Shirley was really better behaved probably than we were.

CN: She didn't have anybody to—.

SJ: —fight with. That was the difference.

CN: And she didn't have anybody to fight with.

SJ: That made a difference.

RE: Did you fight with your brothers and sisters?

CN: No. Mama wouldn't let us. Mama said, I wanted to fight my brother, it was like only things, and my sister was older you know, was in high school. I wanted to whip him. 'No, you don't. You tell me and I'll whip him.' I didn't get to.

RE: I didn't get to?

CN: I didn't get to. I didn't get to. No, I didn't get to.

SJ: But Mama would send us out for switches. That's a thing I used to tell people now. Deborah and I, they were young, they were tight with money because it short supply. We couldn't afford to ask for bubblegum. Shirley came along, she got to go to France. She was in high school.

CN: And they got to go to France. She got to go.

SJ: So she lucked out with a lot of stuff, Shirley did. And we moved into that house, Shirley wrote on the wall with crayons. She was about four. And I was fifteen. And Mama got her and she said, 'Who did this?' and Shirley goes, 'Sandra did it.' I was fifteen, I said, 'Yeah, I'm writing on the walls down here.'

RE: What did you do with her then?

SJ: I don't remember what she did because I think we were both just laughing so hard. I mean, what could you say?

RE: Did you sew? Did you make clothes?

CN: Oh yeah, I made all their clothes.

SJ: She made my wedding dress.

RE: Did you really?

SJ: She made the dress and Grandmother, Daddy's mama, put lace on it that you can't even see from the back side. And Mama's mother was dead by then so Grandmother made a cover to go on my bible to carry that Nanny had given me. But Mama sewed good.

CN: I taught all them to sew too. When they got older.

RE: And how did you learn to sew Charlene?

CN: Aunt Annie. Lived in Erwin, Tennessee. And when I was sixteen—I started at six years old going to Erwin in the summertime for a month with Aunt Annie. And I'd stay a month, until I was about sixteen. And during that time, I went to church there. Aunt Annie didn't teach me. I've got it mixed up.

SJ: Nanny taught you to sew, didn't she?

CN: Yeah. Oh, she got me the sewing machine. Three fifty Singer.

SJ: One of those little black things.

CN: Little black things that you set in a thing and she got me a sewing machine. She knew I didn't know how, she paid for me to take lessons at the sewing machine. I took to it and I made by the book. His mother sewed by hand, she'd make anything by hand. I couldn't. I had to sew by pattern.

SJ: But Nanny taught you some to sew, didn't she?

CN: Yes, she did some.

SJ: And then she helped with you because I know she helped some with you teaching me.

CN: Yeah, I remember all that.

RE: That's amazing. You made all the girls' clothes.

SJ: She had to sew for me.

CN: And Deborah too.

SJ: You had to do it for me because we couldn't find anything long enough. Christmas time, she would sew us clothes and we had to stand there with our eyes shut while we tried them on, so she could hem them and all that, so we wouldn't know what we were getting.

RE: And you all actually did that.

SJ: I did because you know, I don't know with Deborah, she probably didn't. But you had to stand there with your eyes shut. Because I'm so tall, and back then they had no tall clothes. So she had to make mine.

RE: So did you make your own patterns for Sandra?

CN: No, bought them. I had to slice it into the neck.

SJ: Grandmother, Daddy's mom, could have made the pattern. She could have, but I'm like Mama, I got to have the pattern.

RE: Did you knit or crochet? Quilt?

CN: The only thing I did was crochet. Aunt Barrett taught me to crochet. And I made this quilt to cover the bed and I didn't put it together. I did the blocks and then they put it together.

SJ: It took her eleven years on that. But she got it done.

RE: I understand that. I have a quilt in a basket at home I started before my husband died and he died twenty-two years ago. It's still not finished.

CN: Twenty-two years ago.

RE: It's never going to be finished.

CN: How old are you?

RE: How old am I? Sandra's age.

CN: Seventy, almost seventy. Aren't you seventy?

SJ: I am seventy.

RE: I'm a little younger than Sandra.

SJ: She's Deborah's age.

RE: I guess I'm Deborah's age.

CN: Sixty-seven.

RE: I'd like to say I'm twenty-eight. I feel like I am in my mind.

CN: Oh yeah, I do too. But I'm not. I'm getting ready to say goodbye.

SJ: No, you're not.

CN: Yes, I am.

RE: You've got to make it to ninety.

CN: Oh I made it to ninety. I'll make it a week from now.

SJ: You're going to make it longer than that. You've already lived longer than most everybody in the family.

CN: I've got to ask those—after listening to Palliative Care and Hospice, I've got to ask them, what are they judging me on dying, what are they looking for in my body?

SJ: Well, you're fine, Mama.

CN: I know, but is it going to be my legs?

SJ: Legs ain't going to kill you.

CN: My knees?

SJ: That won't kill you.

CN: Something's going to kill me. I want to know what.

SJ: Nobody knows what.

RE: How do you think they know what's going to kill you?

CN: Well they know. They know something. By studying me, they know something.

SJ: Well, your family history, it'll probably be your heart. With the family history. The stroke didn't get you. The stroke just messed her up on the right side, but not—.

RE: Do you have high blood pressure?

SJ: No.

CN: I don't think of nothing.

SJ: Nothing's wrong with her. She's heathy, except just the stroke remnants and sore knees.

CN: She don't know what all I think about. You're seventy years old. If I don't die shortly, you're going to be in the shape I'm in. She going to be in a hospital.

SJ: I am not.

CN: Yes, you are.

RE: Why do you think she's going to be in a hospital?

CN: Her knees, her legs.

SJ: I'll get my knees done sooner or later. Don't worry. I'll get them done.

RE: You never stop being a mama, do you Charlene? Do you want me to go get a switch for you? (laughter)

SJ: I'll get my knees fixed, don't worry, but it'll be a while. As long as I can keep walking without doing it, I'm not going to.

CN: Cut that thing off.

SJ: Yes, ma'am. Do you need to say anything?

RE: I don't think so. Do you know anything else we need to know, Charlene? Well, it's been fun.

END OF INTERVIEW

Transcribed by Alice Helms

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